CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Policy
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1. Introduction

Professional standards are the cornerstone of a professional body. Engineers Ireland recognises the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in maintaining and raising members’ professional standards.

2. What is CPD?

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is timely professional updating. It is the process of lifelong learning for professionals.

A definition of CPD is:

“The systematic maintenance, enhancement and development of knowledge and skill, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the practising engineering professional’s career.”

Attaining a professional qualification is not the end of an engineer’s professional development, just one stage in the process of lifelong learning.

CPD is especially concerned with development of real value to the professional. Learning something new, which is of little or no professional value, cannot be deemed to be CPD.

On joining Engineers Ireland, all members make a fundamental commitment to ongoing self-improvement. It is this underpinning ethos – the professional obligation to learn - that is a decisive contributor to the credibility in society of the engineering professional and the engineering profession.
3. **Why CPD?**

CPD brings significant benefits to members and the engineering profession itself as well as employers and society as a whole. In an environment of rapidly changing technology, ever increasing globalisation, more demanding consumers and greater scrutiny on professionals and organisations alike, CPD helps:

- Demonstrate a commitment to maintaining and developing professional standards
- Attain Professional Titles
- Protect consumers
- Protect the public interest
- Increase client satisfaction
- Increase effectiveness
- Deliver high performance
- Improve employee motivation, adaptability and staff retention
- Enhance job satisfaction
- Promote career advancement and career resilience
- Promote the reputation of the profession

Working in high-profile industries, especially industries directly linked to public health, safety, risk and high-level public investment, places an obligation on members to maintain and develop their knowledge, expertise and experience.

4. **CPD and the Engineers Ireland Code of Ethics**

By agreeing to abide by the Engineers Ireland Code of Ethics all members make a fundamental commitment to ongoing self-improvement, in particular, they agree to “strive to maintain and develop their professional knowledge, skills and expertise throughout their careers” (3.7).

5. **CPD Requirement**

Engineers Ireland has determined that in order to maintain and develop their professional knowledge, skills and expertise, members should undertake a minimum of 35 hours CPD per annum. While the requirement is measured in hours the outcome of the learning itself is more important than the number of hours spent on it.

It is essential you benefit from the activities and that they enable you to meet your learning goals.
6. What counts as CPD (and what doesn’t)?

There are a wide variety of activities that count as CPD and it is worth noting that CPD is not just about attending paid courses – there are many ways of undertaking CPD (for a detailed list see Appendix 1). Engineers Ireland categorises CPD for recording purposes into:

- Courses/Seminars/Conferences
- Work-based learning
- Self-directed learning
- Mentoring/Coaching
- Professional bodies activities
- Further education
- Other

Many different learning activities can qualify as CPD and you must decide which are the most appropriate for your needs. CPD activities will differ depending on your career stage (for examples of which activities are most appropriate for each career stage see Appendix 2). It is worth noting that many of these activities incur no cost other than your time, and you are probably already undertaking them.

Members should aim to undertake a balance of CPD activities across the different CPD categories. Engineers Ireland suggests that self-directed learning should count for no more than a maximum of 14 hours of your annual total.

CPD activities do not have to be provided or accredited by Engineers Ireland.

What doesn’t count as CPD?

It can’t be CPD if it is your usual work routine and you learned nothing. Work activities can only be counted if you can justify that they are non-routine and contribute to your development as an engineering professional.
7. Recording CPD

Having a record of your CPD activities is essential for you to be able to demonstrate that you have undertaken the required 35 hours CPD per annum.

Engineers Ireland is developing *Engineers Ireland’s My CPD* (hereafter referred to as *My CPD*) an online CPD recording tool. *My CPD* will allow you to plan, record, reflect upon and refer to your CPD activities at any time, no matter where you are and throughout your career.

*My CPD* will allow you to:

- Store all your certificates and other evidence of CPD activities in a soft copy. You will then be able to print or access your evidence when you need it no matter where you are.
- Upload CPD plans, records of CPD activities or reflections on CPD activities when it suits so that you can look back on them and use them to enhance your performance.
- Access your CPD data recorded for each year.
- Print and download reports designed to support you in presenting your CPD, whether it is for a job interview, performance review, audit or applying for a professional title.

Members must use *My CPD* to record their CPD activities. Members who do not have access to a computer or are unable to use *My CPD* may keep a hard copy record of their CPD activity. However, members must notify Engineers Ireland of their intention to keep a hard copy before the end of the CPD cycle and provide a valid reason, in writing, for not using the online system.

**CPD Cycle**

The CPD cycle runs from 1st January to 31st December each year.

**CPD Hours**

CPD activities are measured in hours. Assuming a standard working day is 7 hours, one day’s CPD, for example a one-day training course, equals 7 hours CPD. CPD can be measured in a minimum of 0.5 hour/30 minute chunks.

**Supporting Documentation**

Although not a requirement, you can upload supporting documentation of CPD activities such as certificates of attendance/achievement or evaluations to *My CPD*. These documents can be referred to or downloaded at a later date for your convenience.
8. **Professional Bodies’ CPD Best Practice**

Engineers Ireland has chosen to introduce the requirement to record CPD from 1st January 2017 in line with the practices of other well-respected professions such as architects, chartered surveyors, lawyers and medical practitioners, as well as in line with the best practice of an increasing number of international engineering professional bodies.

With increasing scrutiny on professionals and professional bodies, demonstration of CPD through required recording strengthens the public and consumers’ confidence in engineers, the engineering profession and Engineers Ireland.

9. **Authority**

The decision to require all eligible members to undertake and record 35 hours CPD per annum was approved by Council on 27th April 2013.

10. **Who does this policy apply to?**

This policy applies to all members with the exception of student members, retired members and those unable to meet the CPD requirement (see 12. Exemptions below). For members joining during a CPD cycle (January 1st to December 31st) their requirement will be proportional to the length of their membership in that CPD cycle. However, if a member joins in November or December of a given year they are exempt from recording any CPD activities for that year.

11. **CPD Best Practice**

My CPD has been designed to allow members to plan, record and reflect on their CPD activities.

Members will only be required to record CPD activities to adhere to the CPD policy. However, it is recognised CPD best practice for members to plan, record and reflect upon their CPD activities.

- **Planning** CPD activities allows you to set and prioritise learning goals and decide what actions you will undertake to achieve them. This will help you to target your learning effectively.
- **Recording** CPD activities allows you to keep a record of your CPD activities to refer to at a later date as well as demonstrating adherence to the CPD policy. It also allows you to look at the balance of your CPD activities over a period.
- **Reflecting** on your CPD activities allows you to ask yourself questions such as: “What did/will I learn?” and “How did I/will I apply the learning?” It provides the opportunity to consider what further CPD activities might be undertaken to reach your professional goals.
12. Exemptions

All members are required to undertake and record 35 hours’ CPD with the exception of student members and retired members. However, Engineers Ireland recognises that there are circumstances where a member is unable to meet the 35 hour CPD activities requirement. Members will have the opportunity to inform Engineers Ireland of these circumstances using My CPD. These circumstances can include:

**Maternity leave:** You are not required to meet the full CPD requirements while on maternity leave of more than 6 months in a given CPD cycle. However, where a maternity leave is less than 6 months in a given CPD cycle, you are required to meet a pro-rata equivalent of the 35 hour requirement.

**Parental leave:** If you take parental leave you are required to meet a pro-rata equivalent of the 35 hour requirement for the period of the CPD cycle you are employed.

**Sabbatical leave:** You are not required to meet the full CPD requirements while on sabbatical leave of more than 6 months in a given CPD cycle. However, where a sabbatical leave is less than 6 months in a given CPD cycle, you are required to meet a pro-rata equivalent of the 35 hour requirement.

**Long-term illness:** You are not required to meet the full CPD requirements during a period of long-term illness.

**Carer’s Leave:** You are not required to meet the full CPD requirements while on carer’s leave of more than 6 months in a given CPD cycle. However, where carer’s leave is less than 6 months in a given CPD cycle, you are required to meet a pro-rata equivalent of the 35 hour requirement.

**Unemployment:** You are not required to meet the full CPD requirements if unemployed for more than 6 months in a given CPD cycle. However if you are seeking employment, undertaking CPD is perhaps more important than ever: keeping your knowledge and skills up to date enhances your job prospects. There are many free or low cost sources of learning that can count towards your CPD requirements. Activities such as CV writing, interview techniques and research of potential employers and their products/services can count towards your CPD requirements.

**Other:** There may be other circumstances where a member is unable to meet the 35 hour requirement. Engineers Ireland will determine if these circumstances excuse a member from meeting the 35 hour requirement.
However, not every reason for not meeting the 35 hour requirement will be valid. Reasons such as a lack of time, a lack of available CPD activities or insufficient funds to pay are not considered valid. Engineers Ireland encourages all members to avail of My CPD to plan, record and reflect upon their CPD activities even where they are exempt.

### 12.1 Retired Members

Any member who has informed Engineers Ireland that they have retired and who avails of the retirement subscription rate is exempt from adhering to the CPD requirement. However, they may use My CPD to record their CPD activities if they wish. This would be recommended to those retired members who remain professionally active and may need to demonstrate their CPD activity.

### 13. Members employed by a CPD Accredited Employer

Engineers Ireland CPD Accredited Employer standard requires a minimum of 35 hours average CPD per annum recorded for all engineers and technicians. Members employed by an employer holding the Engineers Ireland CPD Accredited Employer standard may forgo recording individual CPD activities and simply upload a single document detailing their CPD activities with their employer as proof of meeting the 35 hour requirement. However, Engineers Ireland would encourage members working with these employers to use My CPD to plan, record and reflect on their CPD activities.

### 14. Declaration

Members are required to submit a compliance declaration and ethics declaration on or before the CPD Declaration deadline. The declaration deadline is set at 31 January. However, if necessary the deadline may be changed by Engineers Ireland and members will be informed of same.

Members can submit the compliance declaration when:

- They have completed records for a minimum of 35 hours CPD.
- They are employed by an Engineers Ireland CPD Accredited Employer and have uploaded a record of their CPD activities with their employer as proof of meeting the 35 hour requirement.
- They are exempt from meeting the 35 hour requirement for a valid reason (see exemptions).

Members who have not submitted the declaration even if they have recorded their CPD requirement cannot be considered compliant.

The ethics declaration asks members to agree to continue to abide by the Code of Ethics, Bye-Laws and Membership Regulations of Engineers Ireland.
15. Verification

Members must keep records to demonstrate their adherence to the CPD policy and should do so using the online system **My CPD**.

At the end of each cycle members’ records will be monitored through **My CPD**. A proportion of members’ CPD records will be selected by computer for verification each year.

Members whose records are to be verified will be notified during the CPD cycle or up to 3 months after the end of a given cycle.

Verification itself will take place after the end of a given CPD cycle.

Engineers Ireland will always make every effort to support the small number of members who may for various reasons have real practical difficulties in meeting their requirements.

16. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Members can access **My CPD** through the Engineers Ireland website using their Engineers Ireland membership number and password. Members should not divulge their password to any third party. Engineers Ireland regards the CPD data as personal information for the purposes of the Data Protection Acts and the Freedom of Information Act 1997, as amended.

17. Versions

Version 1.0 Effective from 8/2/2016
Version 2.0 Effective from 1/6/2016
Version 3.0 Effective from 1/7/2018
Appendix 1 What counts as CPD?
### Structured Opportunities
Visible and ample opportunities; CPD is long duration (e.g. courses, training programmes, job rotations, further education).

### Information Material
Online; books; journals; reading is slow; browsing; somewhat non-selective; CPD is visible and during work hours.

### Interpersonal Exchange
Buddying and instruction; guidance from colleagues and peers in order to learn to do the basics better. Job shadowing is a common choice.

### Focus
Narrow, disciplinary, accepting of norms and standards

### Key Contributor
Structured and planned; perhaps shorter and more targeted (e.g. specialist courses; lectures, seminars; lunch ‘n’ learns; site visits; stretch assignments; special projects; postgraduate education programmes).

### Information Material
Reading and sourcing is faster and more selective at this stage including recommendations from team and network; learning where to source knowledge more efficiently is a key skill.

### Interpersonal Exchange
Coaching from supervisor or manager is increasingly common-place; mentoring (both technical and non-technical); learning from team and through cross-functional teams is also of value.

### Focus
Wider, more multi-disciplinary; challenging perceived wisdom

### Manager-Mentor
CPD generally takes the form of more prestigious events (e.g. conferences, symposia, benchmarking visits; presenting papers; tech blogs; committees and taskforces; research projects; advanced-level educational programmes).

### Information Material
Material is increasingly sourced via recommendations from subject-matters-experts and other experts; Speed-reading is used to top-up knowledge; latest research and trends are digested using horizon scanning methods.

### Interpersonal Exchange
Close bonds with other managers and select social network of experts, internally and externally, who help deep, learning relationships to flourish. Can be active both as a formal mentor and often as a mentee too, use of informal mentors; multi-rater/360° feedback is commonly used.

### Focus
Promoting high standards while also pushing boundaries through creativity.

### Strategist-Leader
Hones leadership traits and behaviours on-the-job as well as through specialist training programmes / further education. Makes significant contribution back to organisations and society in general as a role model through professional bodies, national agencies etc.

### Information Material
Contributes to forums, debates, guest lectures and publications as an acknowledged thought-leader who aims to inspire others. Will play a central role in developing strategy / policy documents which will motivate, guide and inspire others. Reading science, technology, business and management publications.

### Interpersonal Exchange
Acts as a role model, often guiding the next wave of top leaders in an organisation or sector or through organisational, regional, national and international programmes. Leaders at this level will often tap into an informal network of other leaders from across industry to ‘sound out’ ideas and to guide their strategic thinking.

### Focus
Has highly-honed characteristics with recognised clarity of vision and values; promotes ‘the joy’ of engineering